

4VAC15-360-60

Fish: Aquatic Invertebrates, Amphibians, Reptiles, and Nongame Fish; Prohibit the sale of salamander and madtom species.

Summary:

The proposal is to exempt the Mexican axolotl (*Ambystoma mexicanum*) from being prohibited for sale.

Proposed language of amendment:

4VAC15-360-60. Prohibit the sale of salamander and madtom species.

It shall be unlawful to sell any species of madtom (*Noturus* sp.) and any species of salamander with the exception of nonnative newts (*Salamandridae*) and Mexican axolotls (*Ambystoma mexicanum*).

Rationale:

In 2013, the regulations pertaining to *Ambystoma* salamander species were amended due to changes in nomenclature and similarities in appearance between various Ambystomid species (mole salamanders). As such, the Mexican axolotl (*Ambystoma mexicanum*) was added to the list of predatory and undesirable species purely by its taxonomic association. Mexican axolotls are relatively popular in the pet trade and are available exclusively from captive breeders. There is no evidence to support that Mexican axolotls are a threat to native salamander species and should not be precluded from sale in the Commonwealth.